

# 2011 National Blue Ribbon Schools Awards Ceremony



## Celebrating and Leveraging The National Blue Ribbon School Award: Collected Ideas from Ceremony Participants

*From all-school picnics and downtown parades to blue ice cream and billboards, school representatives at the 2011 National Blue Ribbon Schools Ceremony shared a host of ideas for how they would celebrate their success and share their hard-earned knowledge. In a session facilitated by USED Regional Representatives Elizabeth Williamson, Helen Littlejohn, and Dennis Bega, attendees traded strategies and posted ideas. Their ideas are collected here.*

### How Will You Celebrate?

#### ***Parties and Celebrations***

- Prior to our annual Open House, we held a formal assembly for our parents to announce the award. We also provided cookies and coffee.
- Student assembly with necklace beads
- Picnic for students and staff with games
- Have a Blue Ribbon night for students, parents, faculty to highlight the Blue Ribbon success
- A school-wide assembly with video montage of year overview
- We had a catered lunch – children got Blue Ribbon bands; faculty/staff received Blue Ribbon Jackets; we received a Blue Ribbon Banner to display outside school
- Blue Bell Ice Cream Celebration; parade with feeder schools
- Picnic provided by D.A.D.S. Club for entire school
- Blue Ribbon week of events; student-centered; different activity each day—wear blue, blue pencils, blue ribbon badge and ribbon wearing; blue ribbon essay.
- We hosted a concert for the students during school
- School-wide dances by grade level
- Parade to middle school (horses in blue ribbons)

#### ***Community Involvement***

- Community open house; media coverage of open house
- Invite the public in to visit the school and celebrate its success
- Flag-raising ceremony included all MS students and some HS student representatives along with primary teachers.
- Reach out to local and state leaders and invite to celebrations

- Superintendent's dinner
- Our school board held its meeting at our school on the official announcement day and held a reception for our faculty and staff prior to the meeting.
- Having a legislator present the plaque
- Blue Ribbon School pictures and display in local library
- Ceremony with a local TV personality as host, making it a community event
- City council representative issued a proclamation
- Proclamation by mayor presented at village/town meeting
- Formal assembly/ceremony with dignitaries
- Pep Rally, TV, newspaper, high school band, football players, cheerleaders, parade with banners/shakers: All wore blue. Invited county admin, school board, Board of Supervisors, Central Office, former principals, PTO, school alumni
- The school board presented our school with a beautiful plaque that is also on display
- Board of Education recognition; student carnival for student celebration
- State Superintendent and First Lady of Georgia for an awesome school assembly
- Former principal attended parade; former retired teachers in parade; local mayor, representatives, state representatives in parade
- High school band marching in parade
- Celebration Day breakfast (staff & guests), ceremony (with videos from DC), students share essays on "Why a Blue Ribbon School," celebration lunch for students, wrapping building in blue table sheeting as a "ribbon"
- Plan a Blue Ribbon Family Night
- School field trip

### ***Media Outreach***

- Newspaper article
- We were on Channel 12 and in the Rockland and Westchester County Journal News
- TV interviews, newspaper, governor visits
- Publicity: keep public aware of events; let community know that it may start with the administration, but it takes teachers, students, parents, parish...custodians to make us a Blue Ribbon School
- TV from 40 minutes away came
- Tape and televise ceremony on local access channel.
- Local newspapers

### ***Staff Recognition***

- Board recognition for staff
- Lunch honoring teachers

### ***Blue Ribbon Themed Items***

- Blue Ribbon bracelets for all students, staff, and central administration
- Purchase ribbons, magnets, t-shirts

- Wear shirts on special day (tee-shirts for kids & polos for staff)
- Car magnet bumper stickers
- Blue Ribbons on each door
- “Blue Plate” lunch for kids
- Blue Ribbon shirts for students & staff
- Blue Ribbons for each child, faculty shirts, banners, bracelets
- Magnet for cars in carpool (all families)
- Teddy Bear Parade: each bear proudly wears a blue ribbon
- Blue mugs: a National Blue Ribbon School
- Balloon release; blue cookies, juice, and Jello.
- Purchase tee-shirts for the entire student body
- Purchase polo shirts for the faculty/staff
- Hallway blue ribbons
- Cafeteria mural with blue ribbon
- Staff picture for yearbook with their t-shirts
- Wear tee-shirts once/month
- Wear blue one day/month
- Blue Ribbon pencils given out for state tests
- Blue Ribbon Song
- Commencement – blue balloons

### ***Displays***

- A Photo collage of BRS ceremony
- Blue Ribbon banner across the train station announcing our Blue Ribbon
- Blue Ribbon around trees
- We created a Blue Ribbon Display Case which includes the letter of congratulation in a beautiful frame
- Each child tied a blue ribbon on school fence
- Created banners for halls
- Purchase banners
- Blue Ribbons on trees
- Photo of all kids on playground in shape of ribbon in blue t-shirts
- Wrapped school in blue ribbon
- Creation of Blue Ribbon sign to be placed above school sign
- Hang banners on the interior and exterior of the school
- Plant blue flowers around school in the spring
- Dedicate yearbook to Blue Ribbon

### ***School “Branding”***

- Add logo to letterhead and website
- Print stationery with the Blue Ribbon School logo
- Highlight the Blue Ribbon Schools Awards in the school’s newsletter

- Change stationery
- Poster to market school
- Acknowledge Blue Ribbon status on email signatures and student/faculty resumes
- Parent letters

### ***Keeping the Momentum***

- Morning announcement: one sentence motivator – student reads in announcement
- Essays: why do you believe our school is a Blue Ribbon School? Posted around gym for award ceremony
- Emphasize the importance of students and parents in receiving the award
- Video: what makes our school great? Students/teachers comment
- Primary students do art on “Being a Blue Ribbon School”
- Essay for intermediate students
- PowerPoint to explain in each classroom

### **What Resources Do You Need/Can You Access?**

- Grants; donations; academic support
- Student leaders stepping up to plan and motivate their peers
- Change perceptions of lower socio-economic populations and diversity in general
- PTO support – financial; BOE support – logistical
- How do we get Governor to visit our school?

### **How Will You Share Your Successes?**

- Have invited school board to visit classrooms
- Continue to let other schools come in to observe best practices
- Will participate/facilitate regional principal’s meetings
- Will do professional development presentations—RtI, PBIS, VIP
- Will attend and participate in state and district improvement efforts—common core/ RtI/ PBIS/ VIP
- Host the governor and representatives
- Invite parents and education officials to visit classrooms to observe best practices
- Relocation/realtor; PD for teachers and administrators
- The State Dept. of Education is paying for a professional film crew to interview our school and selected people; what we are doing
- School tours for both teachers and parents